

## Trauma Systems Therapy for Refugees (TST-R) Tier 2 Skills Based Groups

[The Trauma and Community Resilience Center's](#) flagship intervention model, **Trauma Systems Therapy for Refugees (TST-R)**, is a multi-level, phase-based organizational and clinical model for youth who have experienced forced displacement. TST-R includes community engagement (Tier 1), skills-based groups with youth (Tier 2), clinical intervention under the TST model (Tiers 3 & 4) comprised of individual and family sessions. TST-R promotes culturally responsive care by pairing clinicians with cultural brokers. Cultural brokers are members of the refugee community who (1) speak the language, (2) share the cultural background of the families being served, and (3) understand youth-facing service systems. Clinicians and cultural brokers are paired together dyadically to deliver services at each tier of intervention. Our TST-R consultants at the TCRC provide training and consultation to organizations throughout the United States on our multi-tiered prevention and intervention model.

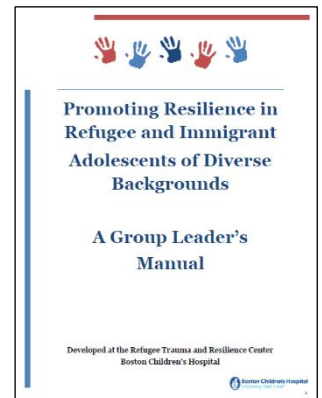
### TST-R Tier 2 Skills-Based Groups with Youth

**What:** Tier 2 is a skills-based group curriculum that addresses barriers to accessing services in refugee and immigrant communities and offers an opportunity for youth to explore the challenges of acculturating to a new school and culture in a safe environment with the support of their peers. Existing curricula include a multicultural manual, as well as culturally specific adaptations for Somali, Central American and Bhutanese students in middle and high school. We also have an adaptation for students with interrupted education.

**Who:** Cultural brokers and clinicians co-facilitate the groups, and work with school staff to offer youth a space that they can enjoy with their peers and focus on skills needed to be successful in school, decrease acculturative stress and increase social support and belongingness, factors known to be associated with better mental health among refugee and immigrant youth.

**Where:** Tier 2 groups are generally embedded within schools, cultural centers and/or community mental health centers and range between 8-14 sessions.

**Outcomes:** Tier 2 groups have been utilized across many programs nationally. Youth report high satisfaction and acceptability and have often shared that participating in the group is one of their favorite parts of the school day.



"I learned to talk about my emotions... We need more groups like this."  
- Student

"I learned to express myself – I learned how to lower my stress."  
- Student

"Can the group keep going? I'm going to miss it!"  
- Student

#### Primary Phases

Establishing Trust and Building Connections in a New Cultural Context

#### Session Examples

- Purpose and Rules
- Goals and Values
- Exploring Similarities and Differences

Interpersonal Communication Across and Within Cultures

- Communication Skills
- Nonverbal Communication Skills
- Positive Interactions

Emotion Regulation Skills

- Emotion Regulation: Identification
- Emotion Regulation: Recognizing Links
- Emotion Regulation: Coping Skills

#### Session Flow:

- Warm-Up: 10 minutes
- Main Activity: 20 minutes
- Snack/Discussion: 15 minutes
- Wrap-Up: 5 minutes

*Description of curriculum phases and sample session topics.*

For more information about Trauma and Community Resilience Center initiatives and resources, please contact:

TCRC@childrens.harvard.edu | 617-919-4630

